

THE LUTHER LEAGUE OF AMERICA

High Ideals

PLTS

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
THE LIBRARY



Dear Sir:

What happened? You were slowly getting the magazines back on schedule. Between December and April you pulled them up almost three weeks. Then, swooey, they're coming to us about a month late now. How come?

—ANXIOUS LEAGUER

Dear Anxious:

What happened is easily stated, but has not been easy to remedy.

Luther Life staff consisted of Mary Erickson (who handles all subscriptions); Doris Smith (who handled all secretarial work, promotion, ads, proof reading, and a LARGE hunk of **High Ideals**); Don Bravin (who worked part-time, got out the news section of LUTHER LIFE, and wrote or rewrote about one topic an issue); and me (editor).

On April 1st, Doris Smith resigned to take up editorial work with the Board of Parish Education.

At the end of May, Don Bravin graduated from Mount Airy Seminary, received a call to a church in Pittsburgh, Penna.

Around the end of August, Eleanor S. Dively, June graduate of Susquehanna University, will join the Literature and Publications department of LLA. She will assist in the editorial end of the work.

So, between April and about the time you read this, Mary Erickson has been handling the subscriptions—no easy task, especially when s/s convention subscription lists come in. And yours truly has been trying—vainly—to do Smith's and Bravin's job as well as his own.

Yours truly,

—EDITOR

High Ideals

SUMMER, 1956

AUGUST, SEPTEMBER

VOLUME 25, NUMBER 3

How To Give a Topic 2

Evangelism

(four topics) 6 - 11 - 14 - 17

Daily Devotions 21

Personal Devotions 25

Baptism 28

The Apostles' Creed 33

Sunday School

(two topics) 40 - 45

PHILIP R. HOH
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How To Give a TOPIC

by Charles Strubel

AIMS OF THIS TOPIC:

1. To give the "know-how" of presenting a topic to a Luther League.
2. To show that presenting a topic is not as difficult as one might imagine.
3. To give inspiration to others to plan and present a topic willingly.
4. To place in the hand of the topic-giver enough material to present to the League, yet not enough so that it might be read to them, rather than preparing and giving the topic in one's own words.

TO THE TOPIC-GIVER:

There has been much criticism from lay-sponsors of Leagues and from pastors about the presentation of topics in League meetings. This topic is to help not only you, but through you to help all of the Leaguers. The written material which follows is not what you would ordinarily find in the topic book, because the topic is very different. Do a good job on this, and you will have little difficulty later on; and perhaps those who hear you will have less difficulty, too.

THE SERVICE:

HYMN—"I Love to Tell the Story"—(CYH (CSB—any appropriate hymn)

THE OPENING PRAYER:

O our Gracious Heavenly Father, we Thee thanks for the privilege of attending our Luther League meeting today. Be with us, now, as we take a little time from our busy schedules and think about Thy Church, and ourselves. Inspire us, O Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfect good which Thou hast done in us, that we say, think or do, might be to honor and glory. Through Christ, our Lord, Amen.

THE RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 103 (352-CYH) (page 190-CSB)

THE GLORIA PATRI: Following the Psalm

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON: Acts 1:6-11

HYMN—"Lord, Speak to Me, that I May Speak" (260-CYH; 212-CSB)

THE TOPIC: "So You're Going to Give a Topic?"

THE OFFERING:

GROUP PARTICIPATION

THE CLOSING PRAYER:

(This prayer may be started with sentence prayers)

We are very thankful our Heavenly Father that in a small way we can bear witness to Thee. Help us to feel that every time we give a topic in League, we are speaking for Thee; and, whenever we speak, wherever we may be, let us always speak with the kindness and the consideration that a Christian should have. Go Thou with us during this coming week, helping us to prepare day by day for work in Thy Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who taught us when we pray to pray: (The Lord's Prayer).

AN OPEN LETTER TO TOPIC-GIVERS

Dear Luther League Topic-giver:

So, you are to present this topic to your League! Then, I am writing you this letter, trusting that it will help you and through you will help the rest of your fellow-Leaguers in the preparation of their topics in the future. Instead of writing it all out for you, I am going to show you how you can give a good topic on topic-giving, and then you can present a "good topic" to your League.

HERE'S THE PROBLEM

Wait just a minute, now! If you are planning to read this topic word for word to your Luther League, you might as well put it down right now. This material is for you to use in your topic, but you are to give it, not me.

Then, you ask, "How do you prepare a topic?" That is the big problem, and one which we will try to work out together in this material. Actually, you are the one who is on the spot, because you, in giving this topic, are going to tell others how to do it. Therefore, you will have to do a good job.

But, the job is not as hard as you might think. There is a way which you can follow in your preparation, and one which you might suggest to your listeners. If you look through *High Ideals* you will notice that the outline of the materials is similar. That is, there are suggested hymns, a Scripture lesson, a call to worship or an opening thought. Then, comes the topic itself and at the end of the topic the author usually has projects, activities, daily Bible readings, and some-

Planning
a group
presentation
is fun

provides
interesting
topics



thing for group participation. So, the course to be taken is outlined for you in detail.

Of course, what we are interested in here is the actual topic material that must be given, so we have to . . .

Get Going!

Step one is to get going on the topic at once! When you are handed the topic book and you have received your assignment, take a look at the topic. Don't think that starting a week ahead of time is too far in advance! Read over the aims of the topic, and then read the topic material to see what the author is trying to say. You must realize that the author has set up certain goals which he wishes to be met in the course of presenting the topic. He has prepared the materials around his aims. Some of these aims have been given to him by the editor. You have to determine what the author is trying to do, and then follow out those aims.

During the course of the week preceding the day of presenting the topic, you may wish to read over the materials several times. Repetition is an easy way to learn. You know that it is easier to pass exams if you review all the time, rather than waiting until the evening before, and then "cram" the material down. You will find that you will not have to read the topic to your Leaguers if you have made preparation such as this.

The topics in "High Ideals" are always worth while. The topics are chosen carefully, and the writers are conscientious in trying to give the best materials possible. If all of this work has already been put into the topic, we, as the presenters of the topics, should spend some time in preparing them. Therefore, we begin to . . .

Plan! Plan! Plan!

Now we get to work. Plans must be made about the topic. The success of the topic depends upon how well the topic is planned. For instance, go back to the aims of this topic. The aims are the ideas that you especially want to get across to the Leaguers. Sometimes there are sev-

eral aims, and you have the choice of one or several of them. There are times when it would be impossible for all the aims to be covered in one topic. So the first plan is to select what you think your league would be interested in. A good standard of that is to choose something that is of interest to you.

Take a look at the topic. Never forget that since you have been "stuck" (that is a poor phrase, isn't it?) with the topic that you have to do it all yourself. That could happen! But there is nothing wrong with most topic material that suggests that only one person be used. If you do want to have others than yourself in the presentation, then, enlist their help from the beginning enough in advance that they will know what they are going to do.

You have selected the aim or aims of the topic which your league will be interested in. Now is the time to re-read all of the material with the aim in mind. Please remember that these topics are written by some of us who have to picture all of the leaguers in the Luther League of America and write for all of them. We can't possibly know how to adapt the material for your league. Therefore, you, topic-giver, must apply the topic to your own group.

Remember, when you are planning your topic, if you need help, get it before the day you are to present it! Planning is the key-word to presenting a good topic with the least amount of effort and worry. Now, do you . . .

Get the Idea?

You've got the idea, but, now, how are you going to get the idea across to your league? In other words, you are taking some material, and translating it into your own words so that your leaguers will be interested and they will learn something. In a sense, you are the "mouthpiece" of the author. You are speaking for him. There are many ways of putting his ideas into the minds of your leaguers: drama, story, objects, group participation, debates, panel discussions, and many others. Use what you feel will be the most effective means of presenting the material so that the hearers will along with you.

All of this leads us to the thought . . .

Be Original!

You never know what hidden talent you have until you try it out! We use such talent in school, in making posters, in our clubs, and in getting together for a good time. Why not use some of this originality in our Luther League?

In this topic, for instance, you could get a partner, and carry on this whole presentation in a conversation. Your partner could say: "Say, Bill, I have to give a topic next Sunday night at league. I'm lost! How should I go about it?" Then, you would take the materials in the first section of this topic—**IN YOUR OWN WORDS**—and tell him. He would ask you a question about each of the parts and before you know it, you have presented the topic, and the league has enjoyed it because you used your imagination in presenting it. It pays to be original!

Let's Outline!

Remember that we began this topic with the idea that you are not to read it! That still goes! If you can't find any original way in which to present it, make yourself an outline to guide you, and present it extemporaneously (speaking from an outline). Pastors, generally, speak from an outline. Your pastor will be able to help you at this point. If you are trying to do this on your own, here is one way in which you might prepare your outline: Use the headings of this topic as main headings, preceding each statement with a letter of the alphabet. So, write them out, A. *Here's the Problem*, B. *Get Going!* etc. Pick out the important facts of each paragraph and number them in order.

When you have mastered the material and prepared the outline, if you want to do a first-class job on your topic, practice going through the topic using just your outline. If you are not too self-conscious, practice in front of a mirror. Several times through and you will have sound preparation.

If you like, place the outline that you make for this topic on the chalk board

so that the League can see exactly how it is to be done. The outline can be placed on the board before you begin the topic and they can follow you along as you speak.

Look at It This Way!

Whether you realize it or not, you are doing an important service by presenting a topic to your Luther League. During the time of the devotion, you are the one representing yourself, your league, your church, and God's Kingdom. That is a heavy responsibility for any one to have. When we have the topic we cannot let any of these we represent down. We have to do the best possible job; and even that is not good enough. Most of the time we put so little time or enthusiasm in presenting the topic. We make fun of the person doing it. We even try our best to get out of doing it. When you look at it this way, though, and you do as well as you can, there is a satisfaction that doesn't merely come from someone saying that the topic was good. Satisfaction comes within you!

Group Participation

A. *Questions that need answering:*

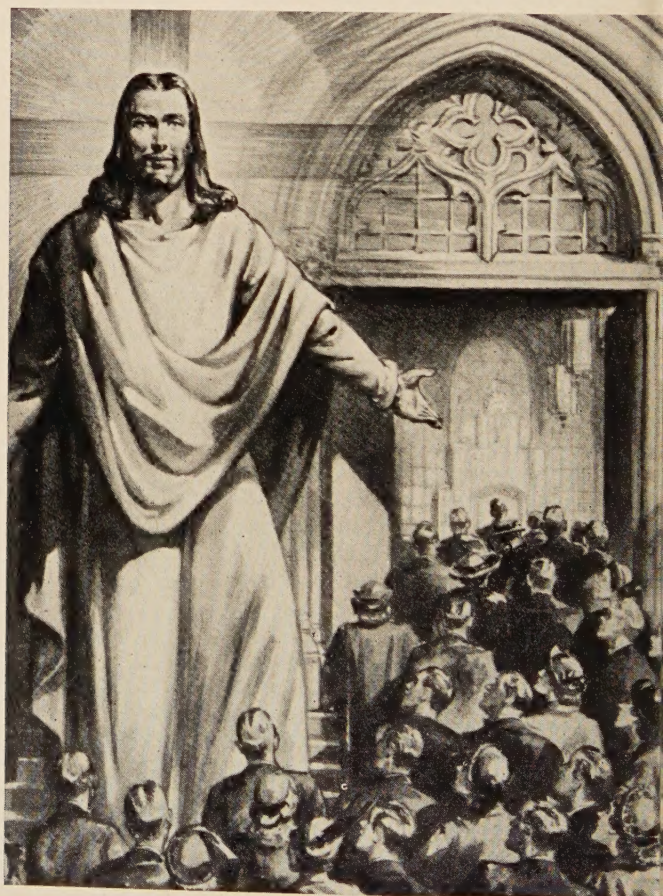
1. How is giving a topic in Luther League an act of Stewardship?
2. How is giving a topic in Luther League an act of Evangelism?
3. Should we rotate giving topics around the entire League, each taking his turn, or should we let the ones who do it better do it all the time?
4. Is it true that leaguers are not interested in giving topics, because league is for fun only?
5. "If I have to give a topic, I won't come to league!" Is that a common attitude?

B. *Try this yourself:*

1. Take a poll of the league and see which topics are of most interest to the greater number of leaguers.
2. Select one of those topics and plan how you would write the topic for another league to give.
3. Work out worship suggestions, hymns, scripture, prayers, and things for the league to do.
4. You may ask someone to give that topic as you have written it at a future league meeting.

EVANGELISM

**a series of
four topics**



**ROBERT BECKSTROM, vice president of LLA,
and HELEN HABERMANN, former Evangelism
Committee chairman of LLA, have written
these topics to help your league "speak up"
for your faith.**

Introduction

One of the most often heard criticisms of Luther League evangelism is that "it isn't practical enough." In an attempt to bring evangelism down to earth so that leagues have something practical to work at, the Evangelism Division of the Luther League of America has prepared this series of topics.

We do not claim to have all the answers to evangelism. That would be like saying that we know all about Christ. No one can know *all*. But we do hope that in this series you will find some helps which will be valuable in formulating your own language program.

Here are five topics on some of the different phases of evangelism. They are designed for us as a basis for league workshops, for deputation teams, or for local league topics. How you can use them best is up to you, but the important thing is that you do use them.

"Speaking up" for Christ is your "big job."

Acknowledgement is here given to Edward Krusan Ziegler for the material used from his booklet, "Sharing Christ with Other Youth," and to the United Christian Youth Mission for material from its pamphlet, "My Christian Witness."

I. What Is Evangelism?

Everyone wants life. Life is the most valuable thing in the world. That is because only God can make life, and once life is gone, only God can revive it. But God doesn't take automatic control over all life. He neither forces men to give their lives back to Him nor forces them to conform their lives to His laws. God is a free giver, and He allows us to choose what we would do with the lives He has given.

This may seem way off the subject of evangelism, but it isn't. This is what evangelism is concerned with—life. Evangelism is concerned with life both now and in eternity. Without evangelism the message of God's way of life would have died one generation after Christ. Christ said, "I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." If those who heard Christ actually say those words had not been evangelists and those who heard them had not been evangelists, and so on down the line, we would never have heard that message. We would never be able to have life in Christ and have it abundantly.

But many of those who heard Christ's message decided to give their lives into

God's care and live according to His law of love. When they did that, they couldn't help telling others how wonderful it was. And so others, too, were able to have life and have it abundantly.

That's why evangelism is so important. Whether or not we evangelize means the difference between life and death to some of the people with whom we come in contact.

Does that seem like too much responsibility? Think of the five people who have had the most to do with your being a Christian. If they had not been evangelists, would you be a Christian today? If during your life several hundred other people had not in some way or another reminded you of the things those five taught you about Christ, would you still be a Christian? If the half dozen or so men who wrote the books of the New Testament had not been evangelists would you be a Christian? Now do we see why evangelism has been so important to us? If each of those individuals had not taken the responsibility of being an evangelist, we would never have heard that Jesus was the Christ.

Can we, too, do less than "speak up" about the way of life through Christ? Can we overlook the fact that some young people will live a whole life without Christ unless we speak to them now? It's a fact that unless a young person joins the church by age 23 his chances of joining after that are only two to 98. The welfare of another man's soul is an urgent matter, and when we realize that a person's decision for or against Christ may hinge on whether or not we "speak up," it is plain that often we are responsible for another's spiritual welfare.

So far, all we know is that evangelism has something to do with "speaking up" for Christ and that this is urgent. Let's see exactly what evangelism is as far as Lutheran Leaguers are concerned.

Evangelism means "telling the good news." It means using every possible way of reaching out to bring people to faith in Christ and His Church. This definition may seem different from the meaning evangelism sometimes has in connection

with revival meetings. That's because revival meetings are only one small phase of evangelism. And an evangelist is not just a person who conducts revival meetings, an evangelist is anyone who tells others about Christ in some way or another. That means that all of us can be evangelists.

Each person can be an evangelist in a way that no one else can, but that doesn't mean that just being yourself gets the job done. It is commonly said that everything we do is evangelism because it gives witness to the Christian way of life. Those are dangerous words because often we do so little that is directly giving witness. Evangelism is specific. Being an evangelist in our own way means doing something specific to "speak up" for Christ. There are three parts to evangelism and each part requires specific action.

Pre-evangelism involves all those steps which make a person willing to hear the Gospel. It means, for one thing, getting them on a friendly basis with the church. This is done both through personal contacts and group work.

Contact-evangelism is the actual invitation to come to Christ. This is real evangelism. The other parts all point to this.

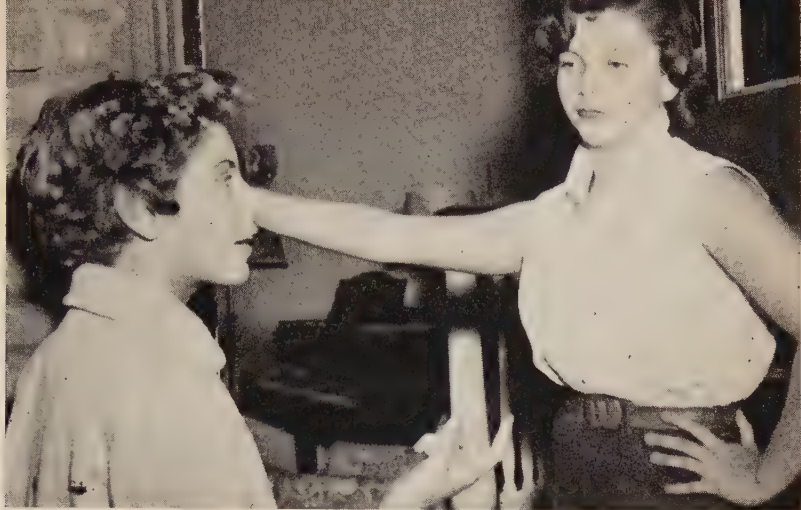
Post-evangelism, later discussed under "Follow-through Evangelism," involves the total work done to keep a person active after he has once started. These are the three main parts of evangelism.

Now, here are some things we ought to discuss.

1. **Why should we cram our Lutheran beliefs down other people's throats?** In the first place we don't do any cramming. Jesus never did that and we shouldn't. We are not trying to force something on people which they do not need. We are trying to meet their deep needs. We hold certain beliefs as Lutherans because we are convinced of their truth. The important thing is that we present Christ in all His truth and love whether Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist or otherwise.

personal
witnessing

it is a
challenge



2. Do we have any right to interfere with a person's private life? Well, is it wrong to *offer* a person something which is of the utmost value and without which his life goes to pieces? This is not interference, is it?

3. Can't people live an abundant life without Christ? Can anyone live a complete life without God! Christ is the only way to know God in truth. Both those who are down and out and those who seem to be living happy lives, are out of adjustment spiritually until they have Christ and His love in their hearts. Is there any good person who would not be far better with Christ guiding his life? And we know that the person without Christ may face a Godless eternity, too.

4. Why should we feel so superior to others that we evangelize them? We do not feel superior. Christ is superior, not we. If we are sincere about evangelism, we should not try to present ourselves as example Christians, we should present only Christ. Sometimes this seems hard to do, but it shouldn't be if we remember our own unworthiness.

5. If a man lives up to his conscience, isn't that enough? No, conscience can be wrong. Remember that St. Paul persecuted the church because his conscience told him that it was right. But later God spoke to his conscience and he turned about and proclaimed Christ. Conscience can be educated. If it is educated right,

it leads a man to Christ.

6. But isn't evangelism just a device to get many members into one group? No, that is not a good motive. Let's forget about big numbers. They will take care of themselves. Christ talked about finding the one lost sheep and the one lost coin. We are dealing with lost individuals. If many people are won at one time that is wonderful, but the purpose of evangelism is to get *individuals* associated with Christ.

We have been discussing some of the problems confronted in evangelism. But there is something else of which we ought to remind ourselves. There are dangers. The wrong kind of evangelism can do more harm than good. But the most dangerous thing is lack of evangelism. The right kind of evangelism can be taught. Mistakes will be made, but that is better than doing nothing, just to avoid mistakes.

Evangelism is important, we have said, because it deals with life. If there is an important ball game coming up, the team practices with care and patience. It is essential that every player does his job right. Is evangelism less important than a ball game? In evangelism the game cannot be won by shoddy playing. There are right ways and wrong ways to evangelize. One wrong play may lose a game. One careless approach may mean the loss of a soul. But just as with the ball team,

there are no short cuts to success. Hard work is the only way to produce the desired results. So, too, in evangelism, hard work is the answer. And even though some mistakes are made we never stop evangelizing. The Holy Spirit is backing us up in all we do.

Here we have come to the place where we must ask ourselves: Really, what are we trying to accomplish through evangelism? Here are some answers:

1. *Relationship with God.* If people are to have life in Christ they must have some basic beliefs. They must realize that they are sinners and that they are guilty before God. This is not a hopeless state, because God is loving and forgives them. Christ paid the penalty for their sin and then rose again to prove that death had been conquered for those who go God's way. But merely believing these things about Christ is not enough. We must know Christ Himself. Unless we know Him and love Him in a more personal way than even our own brothers and sisters, we don't have the right relationship. Evangelism works to accomplish that relationship.

2. *A changed way of life.* Conversion means "a turning about." That's what Christ does to our sinful way of life. Sometimes man may not really see the difference, but God does. When a person is not a Christian, his choices in life are not based on the love of Christ. When he becomes a Christian, Christ's love is the root of every basic decision in life. Of course, some people are Christian in name only and don't have the love of Christ in their hearts. Others have been Christians since they were little children and no visible change in life has been seen by other people. But the difference nevertheless remains. Before conversion to Christ, no matter what age, the heart does not have the love of Christ, and after it has "turned about," a changed way of life results. The life is now controlled by the love of Christ. As you enter the dormitory of Central Lutheran Seminary you see the words "For the love of Christ controls us." That's the way it is in the heart of the Christian.

3. *Membership in a church.* The Church is the active fellowship of believers. That's where we get help from other Christians, and through the Church we receive God's grace in the sacraments and learn of Him. A Christian will not grow right outside of the Church. He needs to join a congregation as soon as he can. Remember Christ set up the Church to help us.

We have been discussing the importance of evangelism, the basic meaning of evangelism, some of the problems of evangelism, some of the dangers, and the goals of evangelism. This is our springboard. This is the starting point. In our next discussions we will talk about how we can "speak up" as individuals, how we can "speak up" through our Lutheran League, about follow-through evangelism, and about what our leagues can do in the total evangelism of the church.

Presentation Suggestions

First, some experienced person could present the background material contained in the first portion of this topic. *Pre-evangelism*, *contact-evangelism*, and *post-evangelism* could be written on the blackboard along with their definitions. Then the league could be divided up into small groups. Each group could be given one or two of the six discussion questions contained in the topic. After they have worked out their own answers to these questions, assemble the whole group and have each small group report on the discussion. Compare the answers with those contained in the topic.

Then the three goals of evangelism (Relationship with God, A Changed Way of Life, and Membership in a Church) could be presented to the whole group for discussion. You might include a prayer session to prepare yourselves for your work in evangelism. The question below could be discussed at any time.

Questions for discussion:

1. What is meant by the word "Evangelism"?
2. What does the work of evangelism include?
3. Does the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) apply to individual Christians, to individual congregations and Lutheran League or to the Church in general?
4. What is the normal way of becoming and being a Christian according to the faith and practice of the Lutheran Church?

II. How We Can "Speak Up" as Individuals

Remember the saying, "God has no hands but our hands; He has no feet but our feet?" That means He does His work through individual people.

Jesus had twelve disciples. Each one went a different way and all but one of them accomplished for the kingdom of God something that the others could not do. Some of these men we have heard much about: Peter, Phillip, and John, for instance. Of others we have heard little more than the mention of their names as disciples. Yet each did his work as an evangelist, or millions of people would not have heard the Gospel.

Your work as a disciple is just as important. God called you to evangelize just as surely as He called Peter, and as surely as He called Paul on the way to Damascus. He wants you to do something for Him that will not be done if you don't do it.

The questions arise: "How can I be a witness for Christ? What does it mean to witness? How do I go about it?" To answer these questions let's think of the

players on a ball team.

In order to be a good ball player a person must meet certain requirements. Just anybody can't make a good ball player. First, we have to find out all the personal requirements for being a good player, get them clearly in mind, and second, we have to find out how we can put these abilities and qualities together to play the game. That's what we're going to do now in evangelism.

1. What are the requirements for being a witness for Christ?

In his booklet "Sharing Christ With Other Youth," Edward Ziegler sums up these requirements best:

"a) **CLEAR BELIEFS**—*We need to think through our own convictions, if we are to help other young people find Christ.*"

Often the quickest way to learn is by doing. In view of this, one of the best ways to strengthen our own beliefs is by trying to tell others what we believe. After the first try we will go home and think of all the things we wished we would have said. But that's good. By thinking out our beliefs so we can tell others clearly, we strengthen them and bring them into focus.

"b) **ABILITY IN PRAYER**—*Nothing else is so important as the kind of concern which lifts up our friends to the holy love of God in prayer.*"

If we need to feel the necessity for prayer, nothing will bring it quicker than the urgency of helping someone find Christ. Tell someone who had not known the love of Christ about the Gospel, and then watch his mind struggle with these new thoughts. If that doesn't make us go home and pray that God will help him, we've got serious spiritual troubles of our own. The way to feel the need for prayer is to do something that cannot be accomplished without prayer.



"c) LOVE—*This is not the wishy-washy, Hollywood kind of thing, but a deep, prayerful, high-minded concern for the highest good of our friends and acquaintances.*"

If we just sit back and observe our neighbor we'll soon be criticizing. But when we begin to try to help him to be Christian, love grows. We may say that we love mankind, but it is loving *individuals* that proves it. And the way to love people is to be close to them so that we can share their problems. Again, evangelism needs love, but it also makes love grow.

"d) HUMILITY—*We cannot reach other young people by saying, 'How I pity you that you are not as wonderful as I am!' What we have to offer is Christ, not ourselves.*"

Humility comes in large part through prayer. When we get close to God we become humble. That's because we see our own unworthiness in comparison to Him. When you get to thinking you are pretty great stuff, get down on your knees for a few minutes with God and see what it does. Humility is needed for personal witnessing, and one way to get humble is through prayer.

"e) PATIENCE—*Sears and Roebuck send out twenty-two catalogs before they will give up a prospect. We must be at least as patient as they.*"

Some times the results of personal witnessing are very slow in coming. It helps us acquire patience if we talk to mature Christians about some of their experiences in personal witnessing. They will be able to tell us of instances where it took years of patient effort to bring just one to Christ.

"f) ENTHUSIASM—*If we know and appreciate Christ and the church we will have a contagious and radiant enthusiasm which cannot help but win the interest of other youth.*"

"g) EXPECTANCY—*Believe that it is possible to win other young people for Christ and the church, and you can do it. It is of the utmost importance that we actually expect something to happen.*"

These are personal requirements for evangelism and how they are developed. None of us measure up to these requirements as we should, but that mustn't stop us from witnessing. We need to be conscious of these requirements and try to develop them *as we witness*. Remember the best way to learn is by doing. Now let's find out the answers to the questions:

2. How do we go about witnessing? What does it mean to "witness?"

A United Christian Youth Mission pamphlet "My Christian Witness" answers these questions well:

"The word Christians have used for expressing commitment in daily living is 'witness.' In a courtroom, a person called before the judge is asked to tell what happened. He is a witness. A Christian witnesses for Christ in the kind of a life he leads. In personal living, in life in the community, and in life in the world a Christian witnesses for Christ. It shows in his life, whether consciously or not, what being a Christian means.

"No one can tell another what a witness ought to be. That is a matter of relationship between the individual and Christ. Here are a few suggestions about ways we can witness for Christ. The suggestions will stimulate further thinking.

How Can I Witness In My Personal Life?

a) By accepting myself.

I can know my abilities and develop them. I can understand my life as a child of God. I can understand what motivates me to do things.

b) By developing a strong moral character.

I can have the courage to stand for my convictions. I can be honest and trustworthy. I can set a Christian goal for my life.

c) By developing a strong inner spiritual life.

I can read the Bible regularly. I can observe daily periods of meditation and prayer. I can attend my church and youth group regularly.

d) **By making my job Christian.**

I can choose the job that claims my best ability, serves humanity, enables me to treat all people as children of God. I can use my job to witness for Christ, to serve others, give honest and hard work, improve relationships among those with whom I work, see my work as a part of God's will.

How Can I Witness In My Community?

a) **By influencing the crowd rather than letting the crowd influence me.**

I can exert Christian influence in such a way that other people will say, 'I want to think and act that way.' I can demonstrate friendship and understanding, refuse to have a part in slanderous and dishonest talk, stand against harmful and immoral activities, maintain an attitude of Christian charity and love toward those who hold different standards. *I can tell others* about Christ and the Church: What being a Christian means to me. What it can do for them. What Christianity does for the world. I can surround others with Christian fellowship and friendship: make others feel they belong to the group. I can be friends with as many people as possible. Be charitable, understanding, and helpful with everyone.

b) **By making my influence felt in my community.**

I can make my citizenship in a democracy an opportunity for Christian witness: Treat all people as children of God. Assume my responsibility as a citizen. Express Christian convictions on political and social problems. Challenge racial and religious prejudice. Expand personal friendship to include all regardless of race, religion, or background. I can help others in my community, participate in a week-end workcamp, assist others in times of emergency, do my part in community activities.

How Can I Witness for Christ In the World In Which I Live?

a) **By knowing the causes of unrest and strife and the steps being taken toward peace.**

I can study the real issue involved in

world conflict: The relation of the individual to family, caste, or nation. The conflict of interpretations of life. The desires of masses of people for independence and control of their government. The problem of poverty in the midst of great wealth. I can know what is being done to overcome these problems: The mission outreach of the churches. The United Nations. Movements for world government. Aid to underdeveloped countries.

b) **By knowing and practicing Christian attitudes of love, forgiveness, and brotherhood.**

I can seek to know the Christian attitude toward war and peace: Secure facts rather than propaganda. Seek answers to basic questions which have troubled Christians about war as a means of solving world problems. I can be Christian in all relationships: Forgive others. Love my neighbor as myself. Practice Christian fellowship and brotherhood. Start to build world peace in my community."

These are some of the things that come under the heading "How we can speak up as individuals." It is easy to see that almost everything we do can be evangelism if we let Christ influence our lives. However, we should notice that witnessing is a *definite act*. Just being ourselves is not evangelism. It takes effort to witness for Christ. We must consciously respond to His call. Witnessing is a way of life and we have to work at it with Christ's help.

Presentation suggestions:

Have one of the leaguers read the introductory material to the group. Then discuss the requirements for personal evangelism one at a time as they are listed under No. 1, "What are the requirements for being a witness for Christ?" You might have three different leaguers present each of the three main points under No. 2, "How do we go about witnessing?"

Questions for discussion:

1. What is the meaning of "witnessing".
2. How "good" must a leaguer be to do personal work?
3. Is anyone excused from personal witnessing?
4. Do personal devotions help in witnessing? How?
5. How does praying for a person help?

III. How We Can "Speak Up" Through Our Luther League

Your Luther League is a potential dynamo of evangelism. You have all the equipment necessary to "electrify" numbers of young people with the message of Christ's love. Of course, this won't happen automatically any more than your community receives electrical power automatically. Somebody had to do a lot of work and careful planning to get power to your homes. League evangelism requires no less work. Too many disastrous short circuits will develop if the job isn't done carefully. League evangelism is a big job.

One thing we ought to understand from the beginning is the difference between "personal witnessing" and "league evangelism." As we discussed in Chapter II, personal witnessing is carried on in a number of ways by the individual leaguer in his daily life. League evangelism, on the other hand, is an organized program in which all members of the league take part together. Sometimes this is called visitation evangelism. This kind of an organized program of evangelism does not substitute for personal witnessing on the part of each leaguer. Nor does

personal witnessing accomplish all the ends of league evangelism.

In order to have an effective evangelism program in your league it is necessary to do a good job of organizing. No two leagues will organize exactly the same way, but there is a general pattern to follow which will give the best results. You will have to work out the details to suit your league. But if you follow this outline, which has worked well in many groups, you will probably have the best results with your program.

1. **Appoint a planning committee.** Unless some responsible leaguers or adults, working as a committee, plan the evangelism program, you will have a hard time getting things done. This committee plans and directs the whole program. It should consist of three to five persons appointed by the officers of your league with the help of your pastor. The committee should include the advisor of the league or another adult. It should be noted here that it is not wise to let the members of the planning committee elect themselves. Have the officers appoint them. It may be well if some of the officers themselves



**Visiting a
prospective
member
for the
congregation**

on this committee.

After the planning committee is appointed, it is up to them to conduct the whole league evangelism program. If they choose, they may appoint other committees to take care of details.

2. **Draw up a responsibility list.** Before you can conduct any organized evangelism program you have to have a list of prospects. Actually these people are more than "prospects," they are our "responsibilities" as Christian young people. Therefore we will refer to this list as our "responsibility list."

There are a number of sources from which you can draw your responsibility list. Your planning committee can find a complete list of places to look for names in the Luther League of America pamphlet, "Evangelism Is Your Big Job." Right now, however, it is well that we don't consider having each leaguer write on a piece of paper the names of relatives, friends, and new persons in the community who might become members of your league and church. You will find this to be a valuable source because these will be some of your most likely "responsibilities."

3. **Choose the type of evangelism program.** You will remember that in Chapter I we discussed pre-evangelism, contact-evangelism, and post-evangelism. Under these main headings, there are a number of visitation programs which you may undertake. The planning committee should decide what kind of visitation it wishes to conduct in view of the responsibility list and in view of the experience of the league. Here are some types to consider:

Pre-evangelism

a) Community religious survey.

Contact-evangelism

a) Visitation of church members who do not belong to your league.

b) Visitation of unchurched young people.

c) Participation in your congregation's visitation program to the unchurched.

Post-evangelism

a) Visitation of lapsed members.

b) Participation in your congregation's stewardship visitation program.

c) Family devotions visitation. (To introduce family devotions in all homes that do not have them).

Don't forget, we are missing the real heart of evangelism unless all we do leads to contact-evangelism.

4. **Callers have to be selected.** These should include most of the leaguers. However, there are some important things to bear in mind when choosing the callers.

Everyone can do personal witnessing effectively because he contacts people in his own way. However, in visitation evangelism some make much better callers than others. That doesn't mean that there's not a place for every leaguer in a visitation. It merely means that those who can do the job best should be chosen to do the actual calling. The best solution to the problem of selecting callers is to let the planning committee make the choices. It should be understood that just because a person is not chosen to be a caller, doesn't mean that he is not considered fit for the job. Maybe all your leaguers would make good callers. Nevertheless, some have to stay at the meeting-place to take care of the other duties (Details are in "Evangelism Is Your Big Job").

These are the qualities to look for and develop in your callers (from *Effective Evangelism* by George Sweazey):

a) A genuine liking for people.
b) A true sense of modesty.
c) Tact in speaking to people.
d) A clean life that shows you believe what you say.

e) Enthusiasm for our church and our faith—and this cannot be pretended.

f) Much patience.

Leaguers who have the above qualifications should be chosen as your calling team leaders. Others can develop these as they work in evangelism. Those who don't seem to fit in well as callers may do best helping with one of the other

(continued on page 17)



continued from page 15)

ities. Try to help them develop these qualities so that they can be callers in future evangelism programs.

5. **Prepare yourselves.** There is no one in carrying out an evangelism program for your league unless each of the leaguists prepares himself spiritually. The following should be done both individually and with the group:

a) Remind yourselves of your basic Christian beliefs.

b) Consider the aims of visitation evangelism.

(1) To awaken in people an interest in Jesus Christ and to help that interest grow to saving faith and church membership.

(2) To encourage a living fellowship with God in Christ through regular attendance at church Services, Sunday School, and Luther League.

(3) To get additional information which will help the church in further contacts

(4) To leave with the person a true idea of the church's concern for the things which matter most to Christ and to people.

(5) To support the congregation in all efforts to conduct the work of evangelism.

c) Conduct special devotions and worship with evangelism as the theme.

d) Pray.

This is not the whole story on group or league evangelism, but it should suggest to you some ideas which you can carry out through the outline in the Luther League of America pamphlet "Evangelism Is Your Big Job." Help can also be gotten from another LLA pamphlet, "Instructions for Youth Visitor."

Maybe you can work out a better outline of procedure for your league than the one presented here. Whatever you do is all right if you give it the proper prayer, thought, and ACTION!

Presentation suggestions:

1. Have some outsider experienced in evangelism lead you in considering this material, or

2. Present a skit or show a filmstrip on visitation evangelism and then discuss the material contained in this topic.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How does this program make use of all the members of the league?

2. How should the planning committee be made up?

3. Is a league without a program of evangelism doing its job?

4. Is it advisable to ask for a decision on the first visit?

5. How long is your league's "responsibility list?"

IV. Follow-Through Evangelism

Except in a very simple book, one chapter is not the whole book. So in evangelism. Evangelism is not just one simple process which brings a person to Christ and then forgets about it. There are three parts to evangelism and they are all-inclusive. We've mentioned them before—*pre-evangelism*, *contact-evangelism*, and *post-evangelism*. The *pre* and *contact* have already been discussed but the *post* could fill volumes. *Post-evangelism* is everything we do to keep those

who have been won to Christ in the active fellowship of the church. It also includes follow-up on contacts which have not yet born fruit.

In his gigantic campaigns, Billy Graham always emphasizes the importance of getting converts into an active church. He does that because he knows that follow-up is all-important in the total picture of evangelism. Christ did follow-up work, too. He continued to teach and help those who followed him. Half of the new members in the typical church soon become inactive because of unfinished evangelism. Too often we assume that writing a name on the church records makes one Christian. That isn't true.

Some new members are like a little baby. They need a lot of help in order to group up right. If they don't get that

Evangelism can be accomplished anywhere, anytime, by any Christian with something important to say.

help they may soon be among those inactive members just mentioned. They need big brothers and sisters to help them along the way. That's where we fit in.

We said that this requires a lot of planning, but planning doesn't automatically take care of it. What new members need is *planned personal attention*.

1. **Welcome** the new young person at the church services, church school, youth meetings, or at congregational activities. Open your circle of friendship immediately to include him. He will be seeking a warm Christian fellowship. If he does not feel a part of the group at once, you may find it difficult to get him to return.

2. **Assign a sponsor** for each new member. That way it is somebody's specific job to be responsible to see that he is made to feel at home. It may be best, however, not to let the new member know he is being sponsored.

3. Help the new member **begin his family devotional life**. It is through prayer and study of the Bible that we grow spiritually as well as through help from other Christians. Make suggestions that will guide him in establishing family worship in his home. Get him started in this right way and from the start it will have a valuable place in his life.

4. **Discover his interests and abilities**. Find out where he can fit in best into the active program of your league and your church. Give him a job to do so that he feels himself an important part in the life of your church.

5. Encourage him to **give proportionately of his income** for the work of the Lord. Don't ask him for money. Show him what a blessing it is to share with the Lord. Let him decide what he should give to the work of the league and the church. When a person develops a real sense of stewardship, money will take care of itself.

6. Help him **catch the spirit of evangelism**. Encourage him to tell others about his "new find." In the mission fields, a new convert is often sent right out to tell the "good news" to another person. Remember we said that evan-

gelism makes us grow spiritually. It helps the new member the same way.

These are some of the personal help a new member will need. There is an important place for league planning. Here are some suggestions.

1. Plan top-notch meetings. All personal attention in the world may keep a new member if the meetings are not alive. That goes for old members, too. Spark up your meetings. The Lutheran League of America has a lot of help available.

2. Special membership instruction talks are valuable for new members. They want to know what Christianity and the church are all about. They need immediate help in getting their Christianity on a firm foundation. Consult your pastor about holding the sessions. If you think that the young people may feel out of place in the regular teen-age confirmation class or in the instruction class for adults, perhaps the discussions could be planned during the church school hours. Then all other confirmed young people could share in the talks.

3. Sponsor a get-acquainted rally or banquet. This will not only help the new members to get into the proper spirit but will serve as a recharge for the old members.

You can think of other ways that help, too. The important thing is to help the whole league including new members moving together. Keep Christ foremost.

Now, we've been talking about how we can follow-through with our evangelism program, but we haven't said anything definite about how this fits into your league's over-all program. Let's take a little time to discuss this matter.

Just like Christmas and Easter, evangelism visitations can't be emphasized year round. One or two stresses are more effective than a continual emphasis. Lent and the month of September seem to be the best times for organized visitation programs.

Remember we said evangelism has three parts? It applies here, too. *Pre-evangelism* goes on all the time. We're always laying groundwork for *conversion*.

angelism. At least we should be. That means we are always on the watch for people whom we might contact for Christ. It also means that we constantly work through friendliness and love to make people willing to hear the "good news." *Contact*, of course, involves the actual situation. It is the definite invitation to come to Him.

Post-evangelism is especially important immediately following the visitation. First impressions are often lasting. Welcome new members in and make them a part of your league and church. Actually, *post-evangelism* must continue always, but needs special attention right after a visitation. Give it a big push by following through on the suggestions already mentioned in this chapter. During the rest of the year give attention to the following:

1. Keep your membership roll up to date. How can you remember who is and who is not coming to league meetings and church unless you have an up-to-date list? Even the best of us are liable to forget a person who hasn't been around for a while. Have your secretary keep the roll current.

2. Call on missing members individually and in groups. This may or may not be part of an organized program to keep all members active. The important thing is that somebody personally contacts members who haven't been to league for a while.

3. Mail reminder cards and meeting announcements to all members. Keep all your leaguers informed of what is going on in your league.

4. Write to those who are in the service and away to school. This will help them to continue to feel a part of your league, and more important, it will remind them to become active in a church wherever they are. These little things mean a lot to those who are away from home.

5. Give disinterested leaguers a specific task to do in the league so that they realize the importance of *their* becoming active personally.

These are some of the suggestions for

general evangelism follow-through and for a year-round program of league evangelism. You may not be able to go to work on all of these ideas right away, but to some of them you can certainly give your immediate attention. Evangelism has to be worked at all the time. Christ never took a vacation except further to strengthen himself for His task. That must also be our goal.

Presentation suggestions:

1. Instead of having just one or two people present the material in this topic, divide the league up into groups of four or five leaguers each. Then have each group work out a little skit demonstrating one or two of the points in the topic. They needn't prepare for this before the meeting. Just give them ten minutes or so at the beginning of the meeting to work up their presentations to be given later in the meeting to the whole league. Or,

2. After the material in the topic has been presented by an individual or several individuals, divide the league into two equal groups. Line these groups up opposite each other as in a spelling bee. Then ask each leaguer one question, directing the question first to a leaguer in group No. 1, then to a leaguer in group No. 2, then group No. 1, and so on, until all the questions have been answered correctly. The group whose leaguers answer the largest number of their questions correctly is the winner. A leaguer has to answer his own question without help from others. (To get enough questions, read through the topic and make up a group of questions based on the material that will be presented. The discussion questions below aren't the best for this kind of a game).

Whatever presentation method you use, it would be well to put this material to work by starting one of the evangelism projects suggested in the Luther League of America pamphlet, "Evangelism is Your 'Big Job'".

Questions for discussion:

1. Won't a new member resent it if a lot of attention is paid to him right at the start? Why?

2. Why is it important to assign a "sponsor" to a new person right away?

3. What is the value of giving each leaguer something special to do?

4. How often should a league have visitation programs?

5. Why is it so important to have good meetings?

6. What is the value of special membership instruction classes?



*private devotions
are as natural as
breathing for the
Christian*

Daily Devotions

by Robert Stackel

Recently a ninety-year-old Christian woman died suddenly at noon. Even at this great age she was still reading her morning devotions regularly. If the light fell directly on the page, she could make out the words with her reading glass. When they found her Bible, the scripture calendar page in her book of devotions was in the right place in her Bible for the day she died. She had had her morning watch with God on the day on which she died at noon.

Perhaps a ninety-year-old person has more time for such things than a busy fourteen-year-old youth today. However, this had been her lifelong practice. She began it when she was a girl. It must have been worth doing, because she did it for almost a century.

There are thousands of earnest Christian young people these days who know from their own experience the value of this practice. "I get up in the morning in time to have a quarter of an hour with God," one of them says, "before I start my day. In the quiet of my bedroom I usually read a chapter from the Bible. After listening for God's voice to me in

that reading, I read a hymn, or a bit from the catechism, or a psalm. I follow this with a careful prayer. Then fastening some thought from my Bible reading in my mind for practice and testing that day, I begin the day."

This is as natural as breathing for the Christian. It is only doing what a person who loves his Lord wants to do. Jesus Himself gave us an example. Although His life was so busy He often didn't have time to eat His meals, He still kept up those quiet times apart with God. They gave Him strength enough for His hard work. When He seemed most weary, He would go off for those quiet watches with God and then come back fresh and strong.

Is It Really Necessary?

Perhaps you have never done this, and you don't feel up to it now. It is all right for those who want to go that far in Christian activities, but you are not planning to become a minister or a missionary. Is it really necessary for the average Christian girl or fellow?

Look at it this way. Private devotions are a way of cultivating our Christian

growth. Can God help us grow without our cultivation of such practices. A wild rose bush has a certain beauty to it. Growing in the pasture, it is not cultivated. It has pretty blossoms, but they are small, frail, few, and short-lived. When we see a gorgeous, cultivated rose, we have no eyes for the wild rose. The cultivated rose blossom is full, fragrant, strong, and wonderfully colored. On a friend's anniversary we would never think of sending a dozen wild roses, but we might send a dozen American beauties. What makes the difference? Long cultivation! God makes both rose bushes grow, but what a difference cultivation makes! Private devotions are the cultivation of Christian faith and life.

Isn't Church Enough?

Some think that church services, Sunday school, and Luther League ought to be enough. But I have a neighbor who plays the trumpet in the school band. He doesn't think it's enough just to play with the band once or twice a week. Every morning at breakfast time he can be heard practicing on his trumpet. If he didn't, he knows that some other trumpeter who is willing to spend time daily with his trumpet will take my neighbor's place in the band.

A student does more than attend classes in school. As he advances up through the grades, he does homework daily at home. He can learn more in school because of his private studies at home. Our participation in church, Sunday school, and Luther League comes to mean more to us as we spend time daily with God in private.

Is It for Youth?

This is all right for grown-ups who know how to go about such a practice, some are thinking, but how can a teenager manage it? Wouldn't it be more profitable later when we are adults?

Life's most important decisions, however, face youth. What shall I do with my life? What kind of person should I date? How much schooling should I plan for? What habits shall I build up for my life?

These decisions will not wait. We need God's guidance in them. Daily personal worship will help us to find God's leading.

Too many of us have a higher opinion of our own Christian qualifications than we ought to have. Because we have been raised in a Christian home and go to Sunday school and church, we feel that we have Christian living pretty well in hand. But the devil's easiest victims are the overconfident. The worst fear of an athletic coach is that his good team may grow overconfident. Because Christians grow overconfident of their ability to live a good life, they neglect practice for their spiritual growth. Then they stumble into sin.

That's why Martin Luther wrote the *Small Catechism*. Church members of his day claimed they were good Christians and yet they didn't even know the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, or the Apostles' Creed. So he prepared the catechism for families to study in the homes. Through this daily practice at home they could grow in Christian knowledge and faith. The same benefits can come to the person who builds a quiet time with God into each day.

Strong Advantages

Christianity in simple terms is friendship with God. The more time we spend with God, the closer friends we can be. He has many wonderful things He wants to do for us, but He can't do them unless we trust Him and love Him enough. Church services and Sunday school help us to trust and love Him more. But that is not enough. If we add to them a daily conference with God, we shall grow into a much deeper friendship with Him. Then He can lift us up to levels of living where His courage and truth and love shine out through us.

Another advantage of private devotion

The Rev. Robert Stackel is currently heading up the Lutheran Evangelism Mission program of the ULCA.

tions is in helping us to live by God's will. Sometimes God's will seems very distant from our daily decisions. Should I deliver Sunday papers if it interferes at all with Sunday school? Is it right to go to the movies on Sunday? Why should I be honest in school tests when others cheat? How can I decide what kind of lifework to prepare for? Should I go to the school basketball game or to the junior choir rehearsal at church?

God has guidance for us on all such practical matters. His leading will bring us to happiness. It is not always easy to find His desire in the matter, though. We must spend much time listening to Him speak to us through the Bible and then bring our problems to Him in prayer. Gradually we discover His way, and when we do, nothing can compare with it. Then we feel well repaid for the time spent in those daily conferences with Him.

Then, too, private devotions help us to become more like Jesus. Just being with a noble person constantly draws us into more of his likeness. We show more interest in things he is interested in. We borrow his expressions in our conversation. We copy his mannerisms. We approach things the way he would approach them.

So it is when we spend more time with Jesus. We become interested in the things He is interested in. We think of things in the spirit with which He would think of them. We live more as He did. Then we are a true Christian. There is no shortcut to this goal. Daily fellowship with Him in prayer and Bible study gradually brings us there.

It takes two hands

Sally is almost always in church on Sundays. She likes to come to Sunday school. When officers were chosen at Luther League, she was chosen secretary. She is considered popular and promising at the church. However, she has never developed the practice of daily Bible reading and prayer at home.

Sally's brother, Bill, is of a different type. Many times he is careless about attending church. He doesn't seem to appreciate Sunday school. He feels he gets more out of reading a chapter from the Bible at home each day, followed by prayer. To him it takes the place of the church.

Sally and Bill are both like a person with only one hand. Public worship and private devotions are the two hands with which a Christian receives God's blessings. We can receive more in two hands than in one. Why go through life one-handed?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does one get to be good friends with another person?
2. How could a person find 15 minutes in the early morning for private devotions?
3. What is Sally missing that Bill is finding, and what is Bill missing that Sally is finding?
4. What if a person were thought queer by his brothers or sisters for keeping a morning watch with God?
5. What would you think of a person whose Bible was beginning to fall apart after several years from use?
6. How can a person become a loser because of overconfidence in spiritual matters?
7. What benefits would have come to that ninety-year-old woman from her daily devotions over a long lifetime?
8. What would you say would be the biggest obstacle for most people to overcome in setting up their own program of daily personal worship at home?

WORSHIP

Call to worship: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

Hymn: "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour," PSHS 207 or "Father of Mercies," CSB 172

Scripture reading: Mark 4:1-20

Prayer: No. 34 PSH, page 28

Offering

Hymn: "Lord, Thy Word Abideth," PSH 119, CSB 168

Topic

Lord's Prayer

ADDITIONAL BIBLE READINGS: John 8:31-51, Daniel, 6:1-28, John 4:4-24, Romans 12:1-21

PERSONAL

Work out the details to suit your situation

"If I were to try morning devotions, I would be unfair to God. The morning rush to school is too hectic. If I tried it before going to bed, I would run into some late nights and start skipping it. Anyway, our house is too noisy for a quiet time with God. We don't have a good place for that."

So the difficulties begin. Taken all at once, they chill enthusiasm for it. But let's face them one by one. Are you willing seriously to consider the practice in your personal life? All right, then, let's tackle the problems one at a time.

When Should We Do It?

There are two times in the day when we seem to feel closer to God than at other times—the beginning of the day and the end of the day. Perhaps that is because we can be by ourselves at those times ordinarily. Jesus found this true for Himself. "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." (Mark 1:35) "And when he had sent them away he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come. . . ." (Mark 6:46, 47).

How shall we choose between the two? But must we choose? Why not use both? At the beginning of the day we can thank God for His care for us during the night and pray for His guidance during the coming day. At the end of the day we can thank God for His many mercies during our waking hours, confess our sins and ask His pardon, and pray for His love to keep us during our sleep. Many Christian believers do this daily. They may also open and close each day reading a chapter from the Bible.

If one of these two periods has to be short, then make the other longer. Which one is to be the longer session depends on several factors. A very important factor is which time influences our daily living more. We want our conference with God to be more than a pillow on which to fall asleep. We want it to change our daily life and give us power over sin.



DEVOTIONS

Building of the habit is time wisely spent

Try it in the morning for two weeks. Then try it in the evening an equal length of time. Which one keeps God's Word in your thinking more?

How Long Does It Take?

No deep conference between man and God can be by clock. Nevertheless, there are limitations upon our time. **Fifteen minutes a day should be the very least we would want to give our God.** Five minutes can go for Bible reading, five minutes for fitting its truth to our life for that day, and five minutes for prayer. If we give it our very best, we shall find ourself wanting to give it more and more time, because it helps us so.

But who could ever spare fifteen minutes from the mad morning rush between rising and school? Those who rise fifteen minutes earlier than they now do could. Would that mean retiring fifteen minutes earlier to bed the night before? If it opened for us a whole new life with God, wouldn't it be worth it? Or, perhaps we can gather fifteen minutes from other unnecessary activities of the morning. Try it! Make some drastic changes if necessary. Just try it with all your heart. Let your alarm clock wake you up to God as well as wake you up for school.

Once you start, beware of ever missing just one day. Every person who has fallen out of the habit of attending church started out by missing just once. The once became twice, then three times. Soon the habit was stone dead. Let something else suffer, but keep this conference with God. Be sure of this, that God will never fail

once to meet with you as long as you draw aside to meet with Him.

If you visit with Him in the evening before bedtime, watch out that a late night out doesn't knock the schedule out. Sometimes it is possible to have our "dates" with God **before** we have our social date in such instances. In either case we would not want our good-time date to crowd out our "date" with God. He put us first in His plans when He gave Jesus to the world. We want to keep Him in first place in all our plans and programs.



Where's the Best Place?

When Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane for prayer the night before He died, the scriptures say that he was accustomed to going there. Apparently this was a particular spot which it was His habit to seek out when He wanted to be alone with God. Each of us can have his own Garden of Gethsemane. It may be a particular corner of our bedroom. It may be a chair in a spare room. It may be a place in the parlor when others are not around. In the summertime it may be in the yard or on the porch. It is well to keep the same place as much as possible, for then we associate that place with our fellowship with God.

Make sure that it is as free from interference as possible — away from the radio, television, family conversation, and other distractions. We don't want God listening with only one ear when we pray to Him. He doesn't want us listening with one ear when He talks to us. It is helpful to add Christian atmosphere to the place of prayer. A Christian picture hanging on the wall, a small cross on the table, a prayer book, a Bible—all these can help to make God seem more real and near.

It is not necessary to keep our private devotions a secret from others where we live. When the door is shut at the accustomed time, they may know we are in conference with God. This knowledge will encourage them to do likewise. As each member of the family has a personal session daily with God, the atmosphere of the whole home will be changed and Jesus can be truly present with that family.

Handling Distractions

No matter how hard we try, distractions will come into our quiet time with God. Someone will shout to someone else in the house. A honking auto horn may sound outside the window. Children at play outside will call to one another. Our mind may wander, even without any outside noise. What can we do when distractions tease us away in our attention?

1. Try reading aloud. This will help to focus our attention upon what we are reading. It can be in a soft voice or in whispers. We can pray likewise to God. The mind does not wander so easily under these circumstances. However, this is only for occasional use, unless its regular use for some reason is desirable.

2. Build a devotional thought around the distraction. If it comes during prayer or meditation, we can make use of it. When the morning sun beams through the window upon us so as to make us conscious of it, we can pray, "God, warm my heart with Thy love, I praise Thee, and light my way today so that I may walk in Thy path." If an auto starts up in the neighbor's garage, we can pray, "Dear Lord, start up my love for Thee this day, that I may perform Thy will because I love Thee." If a bird sings in a nearby tree, we can pray, "O Father, may the birds sing Thy praises, may I, too, praise Thee today by remembering Thy Word and practicing it."

3. Do something unusual to make God's presence real. A certain Christian seemed to lose touch with God in his prayers. He was praying, but he could not feel sure in his heart that anyone was above was listening to his prayers. When he laid the problem before his pastor, he was advised to put an empty chair beside the bed when he knelt for prayer and to imagine that God was sitting in it. This seemed to bring back reality to his prayers. You may find a different way. When you find it, you will know that it was well worth all the trouble and thought it took to find it.

4. Try shorter prayers. If five minutes of prayer with God gives your mind the wanders, try a shorter length prayer and make several such shorter prayers during the day. The Lord's Prayer is a short prayer. God doesn't time our prayers, but He does take careful note of our sincerity in prayer.

5. Make a written prayer outline. Put in it main headings for thanks, confession of sin, prayers for others, and prayers for our own needs. Fill in a group of particular things under each heading.

Keep this outline before you as you pray.

6. **Make a mental summary to yourself after your Bible reading.** Read the day's passage from the scriptures knowing that you must report to yourself what it was all about and what a few important ideas were from that section of the Bible. Above all, select one thought which seems like God's message for you that day and then determine to practice it.

Of course, the greatest problem is bringing our stubborn will to pledge themselves that the practice of daily private devotions is a "must" in Christian living. When we top that hurdle, all these other problems will work themselves out under careful prayer and planning.

ADDITIONAL BIBLE READINGS: Luke 6:12-16, Luke 18:1-14, Ephesians 3:1-21, Psalm 119: 1-24.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the morning for devotions? What about the evening? Which do you think is better?

2. What problems are apt to be met in finding a place for this and how can these problems be met?

3. If you have tried private devotions at any time of your life in any way, what help did it give you and what difficulties did you find?

4. Which of the suggested ways of meeting distractions seem the best to you? Can you suggest others?

5. Read John 11:41-44 and Luke 23:46. Was Jesus praying out loud here? Why do you suppose He prayed this way?

Reverend Stackel has held pastorates
in Rochester, N. Y., and in Pittsburgh, Pa.

6. What would be some things to put under the various headings of a prayer outline? Can you suggest half a dozen under each heading?

7. How would you divide up 15 minutes for devotions? How much time would you assign to what procedures?

WORSHIP

Call to worship: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Prayer: O Lord Jesus Christ, whose way is perfect: help us, we pray Thee, always to trust in Thy goodness. As we walk with Thee and follow Thee in all simplicity, may we possess quiet and contented minds; and cast all our care on Thee, for Thou carest for us; who livest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Hymn: "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind," PSH 223; CYH 215

Scripture reading: Luke 11:1-10

Hymn: "Singing for Jesus, Our Saviour and King," PSH 257

Offering

Topic

Sentence prayers of thanks by members of the group

The Lord's Prayer

**shutterbugs
photohounds
picture fans**

**Luther Life
photo contest**

See August issue for details

BAPTISM

by Wilton D. Ernst

Suggestions to the Leader:

This type of topic is somewhat different than most of the topics presented in High Ideals. Its purpose is not so much to bring out the viewpoint of the boys and girls as it is to inform them of the profound work of God in this simple act, to help them appreciate both the historic importance and the present day reality in their own lives.

The topic material should be read carefully in advance. Normally it should not be read at the meeting. The leader should perhaps use the questions at the beginning of each section to stimulate the thinking of the group, and then go into the material to crystallize and perhaps correct their ideas.

If the topic is planned far enough in advance that the group can attend a Church Service while a child is being baptized, they will be stimulated to questions and discussion. A copy of the Common Service Book ought to be available at the meeting for reference to the Baptismal Service. Luther's Small Catechism should be available also for referring to his statements on Baptism.

At least two good filmstrips are available: "Holy Baptism" (Luther's Catechism Visualized, 47 frames, \$4), and "Jesus' Baptism" (Concordia, 20 frames, \$5).

Worship suggestions:

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Dear Father, we are constantly amazed at the wonders of nature, and the wonders in our own lives. But most of all we marvel at Thy love for us, shining through the works of Thy Son Jesus. Direct our thoughts this night. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

HYMN: "I think when I read that sweet story of old" (PSH 151)

THE APOSTLES' CREED

SCRIPTURE: Acts 16:16-33

PRAYER:

"O Jesus Christ, the Lord of all good life who hast called us to help build the city of God: do Thou enrich and purify our lives and deepen in us our discipleship. Help us daily to know more of Thee, and through Thy power of Thy Spirit, show forth Thyself to other men. Make us humble, brave, and loving; make us ready for adventure. We do not ask that Thou wilt keep us safe, but that Thou wilt keep us loyal; who for us didst face death unafraid and dost live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen. (CYH 64)

HYMN: "I was made a Christian" (PSH 124)
BENEDICTION: "The blessing of Almighty God"



the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be with us all. Amen."

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Matthew 3:7-17; Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-8; Acts 2:37-42; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 9:10-20; Titus 3:1-7

The Topic

Do you remember when you were baptized? Probably not. Most children born in Christian homes are baptized within the first weeks or months after birth. Your memory would hardly go back that far. Very likely your only response to the pastor's words were a few lusty yowls. Or you may have slept through it all.

But something important was happening. Your parents were making earnest promises to God. Your Church was sharing in prayerful interest. And, most important, God was doing something wonderful in you. But what? What really happens in Baptism?

WHAT WE SEE—THE HUMAN ACT!

Questions for discussion:

1. Is baptism the same as christening?

2. Why do we use water in baptism?

3. Is some special kind of water used? Would water from the Jordan River be better than ordinary water? Does the water have any special healing value after being used for baptisms?

4. What are Godparents? Are they the same as sponsors? Does the Lutheran Church require sponsors in addition to the child's parents?

A little water is taken from the Baptismal Font—or it could be from any bowl—and is applied three times to the head of the child (or adult), while these words are spoken:

"John Henry (the child's name), I baptize thee in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

This act of baptism is preceded by direct questions to the parents and other sponsors. (The chief sponsors are always the parents if Christians. The Church permits but does not require additional sponsors or Godparents, who should be members of the Church.) These sponsors make specific promises for the child:

"Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?" "Do you present this child to be baptized into this Christian faith?" "Do you promise to instruct him in the Word of God, and to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?"

And the parents and other sponsors answer, "Yes, I promise."

In this promise is included the direction to the parents to teach the child the Ten Commandments, The Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. As he grows they are to bring him to the Church Services and provide for his Christian instruction. Such instruction would include the teaching of God's Word in the home, in the Church Schools, and in Confirmation instruction.

In this simple, solemn act, the child is baptized or christened (the word "christen" means to "Christ-en," to make a follower of Christ).

Methods of Baptizing

Most of the large denominations, including the Roman Catholic, perform the Sacrament of Baptism much as we do in the Lutheran Church, that is, by sprinkling. But other groups such as the Baptists, Mennonites, Disciples of Christ, Pentecostals, baptize by immersion. In immersion the whole body is plunged under the water. Churches which practice this method of baptism are usually equipped with a baptismal pool in which the candidates can be immersed. Other groups go to a quiet lake or bay or to a nearby river. Going all the way under, they feel, is a symbol of Jesus going into the grave; coming up from the water becomes a symbol of His rising from the dead to the new Life.

Obvious difficulties arise from immersion, such as the baptism of the aged and infirm and seriously ill. And of course infants would hardly be baptized in this way. But Churches that practice immersion never baptize infants anyway.

As Lutherans we are convinced that it is not the amount of water that makes the difference. It is "the Word of God, which accompanies and is connected with the water, and our faith, which relies on the Word of God, connected with the

water" as Luther's Small Catechism declares. Thus we practise the less dramatic but more practical method of sprinkling.

The water used is plain ordinary water; and after the Baptismal Service it is disposed of in the most convenient way. Needless to say it has no special medicinal or curative value; to consider it as having healing properties is pure superstition. Sometimes sentimental pastors will bring back water from the Jordan River, where of course Jesus was baptized, and use it over and over again for baptisms. Such water of course has no special value in baptism, and may actually become dangerous through contamination.

By baptism we become Church members

Baptism is the doorway into the Christian Church. Nearly every church body agrees that everyone must be baptized to become a church member. Children who have been baptized are counted in our church membership (usually in listing membership, however, we make a distinction between Baptized, Confirmed and Communing members). In the minds of non-Christians, baptism is regarded as the distinctive act, the entrance into the religion of Jesus.

WHAT WE CANNOT SEE—GOD WORKING IN BAPTISM

Questions for Discussion

1. Is baptism just a symbol of cleansing, or does something actually happen in us?
2. Can anyone be saved without Baptism?
3. How soon should one be baptized?
4. What happens to children (or adults) who die without being baptized?
5. How can we use our Baptism every day?

The Rev. Wilton D. Ernst is pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Reformation, Philadelphia, Penna.

Baptism did not begin with Jesus. It was practiced to a limited degree in the Jewish religion. John the Baptizer had made it a dramatic symbol of the need of cleansing; it served as a pointer to the One, John prophesied would come, who would baptize them "with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:16). It was only after Jesus' mission on earth was completed in his suffering and death and resurrection that he gave the great emphasis to Baptism, in what we call the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19, 20)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Here were the emphases: Baptize, teach. So make disciples.

Even before this Jesus had referred to Baptism without mentioning it by name when he talked to Nicodemus. Nicodemus was the timid Jewish teacher who came to Jesus secretly by night because he didn't want to be seen by his friends coming to this young distrusted Teacher. To him, Jesus spoke the startling words, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."* (John 3:5, R.S.V.)

To Nicodemus' surprised reaction, Jesus proceeds to speak of the work of the Spirit, mysterious as the wind, bringing new life into the heart of the believer.

In Baptism one is therefore born again, born anew. It is the work of the Holy Spirit; it is entirely the work of God. We fulfill the conditions he laid down: we apply water in the Name of the Triune God, and he creates the miracle of eternal life in our hearts. Naturally we can't see it. We may not feel it. But we have his unfailing promise that he has created his new life within us. By our natural birth, through our parents, we became creatures of God. By our Baptismal birth, through the Holy Spirit, we became children of God. We have become part of his beloved family.

God has "adopted" us as his own children. We have become heirs of all his treasures.

*I was made a Christian
When my name was given,
One of God's dear children,
And an heir of Heaven.
In the name of Christian
I will glory now,
Evermore remember*

My baptismal vow. (Hymn 552, P.S.H.)

The Early Church emphasized Baptism

On the day of Pentecost, Peter's bold sermon in Jerusalem shook many a heart. "What shall we do?" they asked. And Peter replied:

"Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off. . . . (Acts 2:38, 39)."

And Paul, when the jailer in Philippi released him asking, "What shall I do to be saved?" replied, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved you and your household."* And Paul baptized them at once.

So the way into the Kingdom was clear: Repent, Believe, be Baptized. So Christians were made. So whole families were baptized into the Name of Jesus. And children, though they might not yet understand, were undoubtedly baptized too as part of the family, in the assurance that their faith would grow under the careful Christian instruction of their parents. So we baptize infants today and make them part of God's family, confident their faith will develop as they learn God's Word at home and in Church.

What if you aren't baptized?

Would a person be lost forever if he dies without baptism? What about an unbaptized infant?

In Mark 16:16 we have the blunt words, ascribed to our Lord, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but

he who does not believe will be condemned."

Article 9 of the Augsburg Confession declares: "Of Baptism, they teach, that it is necessary to salvation, and that through Baptism is offered the grace of God; and that children are to be baptized, who being offered to God through Baptism, are received into His grace."

Thus both the Scriptures and our Confessions declare the utter importance of Baptism. Yet we remember that the one dying thief on the cross was not baptized, yet Jesus promised him Paradise. God undoubtedly has other ways than he has told us.

Nevertheless, Baptism is the *normal* way of admission into God's Kingdom. We can be certain of forgiveness, strength to resist evil, and eternal Life through it.

A child of about four took ill suddenly and died in less than an hour. Her parents had delayed having her baptized for one excuse or another. When she died unbaptized, her mother was in torment of guilt. Assurance was given by the pastor that while baptism is the normal way into God's Kingdom, we must trust that he has other ways, and that we must rely on his mercy. She was hard to convince. How much assurance and consolation it would have been to her had she had her child baptized!

Sometimes boys and girls whose parents have been neglectful suddenly realize that they have not been baptized. They should go to their pastor and be baptized without delay.

Infants should be baptized as soon as they may safely be taken to the church. In case of emergency, the sacrament would be administered at home.

We dare not judge God's mercy by our own limited understanding. But neither dare we ignore the explicit command of Jesus, "Go . . . make disciples. Baptize! Teach!"

Is Baptism all we need for salvation?

Of course Baptism is not the end of the Christian Life; it is just the beginning. After being born, a baby has to be fed and tended and loved if he will grow to manhood. So the new life in us must be fed and nourished. Parents and other sponsors must teach and train and encourage with loving example and Christian instruction. The Church Schools feed the growing faith on the Word of God. Confirmation instruction when he reaches thirteen or fourteen prepare him to make his vows to God. In the Confirmation Service, he "confirms" the promises of loyalty made by his parents when he was baptized. God in turn "confirms" the promises he made at Baptism to grant eternal Life and his continuing blessing. That new life should continue to grow in full participation in the work of the church and of the Lord.

Using our Baptism

Baptism as an act takes place only once. But the meaning of this gracious act of God should be in our thoughts daily. In the first place it assures us of our salvation through Christ, putting an end to our foolish fears and our frantic efforts at self-salvation. In the second place it reminds us of our constant struggle against our own sinful nature, "the old Adam" within us. Only in this way can we go on as joyful and courageous Christians.

● One reason we failed in Asia was that we couldn't believe, or wouldn't believe, that people really starve to death. We were too well fed to believe it. I couldn't believe it until I saw it happen in China . . . We talked freedom to people whose only freedom was freedom to starve. You can't eat freedom.—*Keyes Beech*.

● The traditional prayer of the conservative vestryman praying for his parson still seems to prevail: "Lord, you keep them humble and we will keep them poor." Salaries of clergymen now rank somewhere below the wages of carpenters, but slightly above those of truck drivers.—*Commission Report to Gen'l Convention of Protestant Episcopal Churches*.

The Apostles'

C R E E D

—some ideas to
stimulate your
thinking about it

by Arthur E. Yeagy

*"I believe in the God the Father
Almighty, Maker . . ."*

A friend of mine recently attended a conference among the high slopes of the Allegheny mountains of western Pennsylvania. The sturdy, rambling building in which the meeting took place, the beautifully landscaped lawns and gardens, and the breath-taking views made their impression on him.

It was not quite the setting in which he normally lived and worked. He fell to thinking of the abundant resources that are in the hands of God, and of the abundant wealth some men gain, and of which others may only have a glimpse.

"Now wouldn't it be silly of me to say all this belongs to me," he said. For it doesn't, really. And no matter how often or how loudly I should say it does, the facts will not change. It probably belongs to men who have more money than I'll ever have, or care to have.

"And it would be just as foolish to say the owners do not really exist. The buildings, the lawns are here, but they are an accident. They just happened. Nobody made all this. There are no owners. Nobody is in charge."

I knew he was driving at something, but at first I wasn't sure what it was.

"Well, if you think that is silly, what about the man who can't or won't get the point of the first article of the Apostles' Creed?"

Not being quite as nimble of brain, I thought it over a few minutes. Then I began to see.

For a man to stand up in God's world and say "All this is mine!" Or for a man to pretend an estate belongs to him just because he can't see the owner at the moment, or because he has cared for some minor parts of the property—is there any difference?

No amount of loud talk will change the facts of the first article of the Apostles' Creed. I am not the owner of this world. God is. I am here to enjoy it, to work in it, to use it, to make of it a blessing to others. And even my hands, my thoughts, all things in and around me—God has given them to me to work with, to use.

It is equally unreasonable to look out on God's world and to deny that there is a maker or an owner. The man who claims that the world, the heavens, all

human life, all existence "just happened" is no different than the man who looks on a magnificent mansion and garden and refuses to accept the fact of an owner, or someone in charge.

Certainly a reasonable man can look about himself and heartily say, *I believe that God has created me and all that exists.*

"And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord . . ."

Dr. James A. Pike, dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (Episcopal), New York City, tells of a summer vacation.

The family started out early in the morning with all the vacationing gear

carefully selected and packed in the car. Father planned that they should be at their vacation cottage in the village in time to unpack before dark, and do some shopping at the village store.

But the usual unexpected delays took place. There was an unannounced detour, and the stop for lunch was longer than planned. Mother recalled a lovely view that could be seen on a short side trip. And Susan and Junior demanded two or three more stops than father had figured on.

The family arrived safely, tired, and about two hours later than planned. Result: no shopping that day. But there was enough food for a late, very welcome meal.

"Where shall I put the table scraps, mother?" Susan called as she cleared the table.

"Thank goodness we brought that plastic container," mother answered. "Junior, you and father must buy a garbage can in the morning."

Next morning father and Junior proudly brought home a gleaming white garbage can. It was the kind you operate by stepping on a pedal and the lid flies open.

But in less than two days the fine new container was filled. Something more would have to be done. Father and mother sat down to discuss, and Junior, noting the problem, started to explore.

"Mother! Dad!" Junior called as he ran toward them. "I have the answer. There's a big closet beside your bedroom, and nothing in it. Let's go over to the village and get two or three real big cans, and we'll have enough space for garbage for the rest of our vacation."

Father smiled, and very patiently explained some of the practical problems of sanitation.



tion the suggestion involved.

"No, son, this is a matter we can't handle alone. This family needs help from the outside. The garbage problem seems like a simple one, but it's too big for us by ourselves. Someone outside the family must be called in. This afternoon you and I will go into the village and make arrangements with the sanitation men."

Junior hurried away, and Susan picked up a magazine. Mother sat in silent thought for along minute.

"John, isn't that a homely parable of life?" She paused, then continued, "Isn't that about what pastor means by justification by faith? If we only were wise enough to know that we can't go it alone, ever, that we need help from outside. Help is there, ready for us to use."

Father looked a little startled. At first it appeared he was going to make light of mother's homespun theology, but then he began quite seriously: "Mother, I believe you have something there. The burdens, the refuse of life pile up, and we go along in such cock-sure fashion, convinced we can handle things ourselves. The delays, the unexpected accidents of life, the things we can't foresee make us more dependent on God's help than we are sometimes willing to admit. In fact, some people never will admit their predicament, until life itself is spoiled almost beyond reclaiming."

"Now I feel better, John! I was afraid you would laugh at me for picturing God as a kind of cosmic garbage man. But that's just about how helpless we are without Him, unless we welcome Him in Jesus, *Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, secured and deliv-*

ered me from all sins, from death, and the power of the devil."

Father responded slowly, "Yes, and think what it cost Him, and how little it costs you and me—*not with silver and gold, but with His holy and precious blood, and with His innocent sufferings and death.*

"Susan, will you call Junior, please? I must tell him how he has led us to a new understanding of the second article of the Creed. I hope he will see it too. Perhaps this will help us all accept more gladly and readily what Jesus has done for us. Perhaps we can share with him in knowing Jesus at all times, and not wait until the difficulties of life drive us beyond ourselves."



"And in the Holy Ghost . . ."

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when Bob and Steve left the house for a walk in the woods. It was a mountain forest, really, and the house in which they were staying was a cottage they had rented for the summer. It was located right where open country and wooded slopes meet.

The boys had been warned about going too far into the forest alone. And they had no intention of disobeying. They meant to keep their promise to be back by five o'clock. The trail was clear, and there were so many interesting things to see. Before they knew it they had left the trail and were wandering from one unusual growth of fern or mountain flowers to another. They had never before noticed how beautiful and varied the fungi were. The odd shapes of fallen trees and of stumps, their various stages of decay, the way the growth of moss increased over them—all these they saw. It's no wonder that it was after six o'clock when Bob looked at his watch, and called to Steve in surprise.

"Where's the trail? We'd better get back to it quickly. Do you know what time it is. We're an hour late right now!"

The boys were not uneasy as they started to look for the trail again. For a little while they called to each other as they noticed new trees and plants, or when a bird suddenly flew out of its treetop nest, or a squirrel hurried up a tree trunk to its home.

The boys grew more silent. They walked faster, or tried to. But they found the laurel clumps, the low branches, the fallen trees blocking their way much more often than they had expected. Progress in a straight line was almost impossible.

Steve called out, "We should be on the trail soon. What time is it now?"

"It's nearly seven. The trail can't be

far from here. Let's keep going. I'm hungry, and I'll bet you are too."

The boys showed a few signs of weariness as they made their way still further through the woods. Nearly another hour passed, and Steve called again.

"Let's stop awhile, Bob. I'm tired. These bushes are making my face and arms sting. I'll bet we're lost, that's what!"

Bob was silent for a few seconds. "Alright, I'm agreed to stop for awhile. I don't know if we are lost or not, but we don't seem to be getting any closer to the trail. It's nearly eight o'clock now. I wonder what mother and dad think. Hope they are not real angry."

"I'll bet they are out looking for us right now. Let's stay here. They'll be calling for us, and we'd never hear them, scrambling along as we have been."

So the boys found a spot in which they were fairly comfortable. They sat quietly, listening and waiting.

Back at the cottage mother was busy through the afternoon. Dad came back from fishing about five-thirty.

"Where are the boys?" he called.

"They'll be back soon. They went for a walk along the forest trail, and promised to be back by five o'clock," mother replied.

It wasn't long until they began to grow uneasy. When the boys didn't return by six, dad hurried out, found several men who knew the forest well, and the search was on. Going into the forest two by two, they paused every few minutes, called and listened.

It was eight-thirty when dad and his partner heard eager, yet obviously tired voices cry "Dad! Is that you? Here we are, over this way."

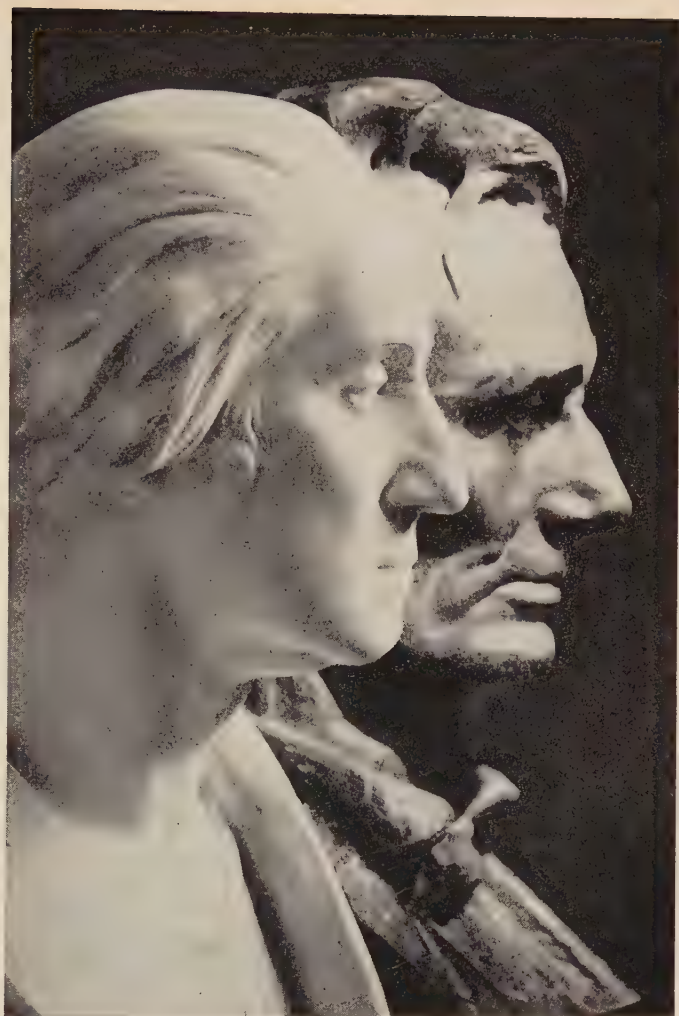
The boys were soon home again. Hearty thanks were given to all who helped. Baths and food left Steve and Bob feeling much better. Parents and boys had much to talk about. There was very little scolding—not much was needed!

Dad told how the search was organized, and how it proceeded.

The Rev. Arthur E. Yeagy is assistant to the president of the Central Pennsylvania Synod of the ULCA.

**What
you
believe**

**makes a
difference**



"It's a good thing you kept calling. If you had called only once or twice, we might have missed you," Steve said.

"Yes, and you were calling before we even knew we were lost. I guess you knew we were lost before we did," Bob said, thoughtfully.

Steve suddenly sat up straight. "Wait till I tell Pastor Ives about this. That's

almost the way he explained the third article of the Creed. The Holy Spirit keeps calling us, he said. He knows we are lost even before we know it. And the Holy Spirit calls us even before we call Him. You were in the forest there all the time. We were never alone, only we didn't know it!"

Bob could scarcely wait for his turn.

"Yes, and He does that for everyone. *He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith.* I didn't know I remembered those words. How clearly I see them now!"

"Yes, we are all part of the great company of THE FOUND!" Dad added thoughtfully. "God is like that. He did more than start the world on its way. He was seen in Jesus of Nazareth nearly two thousand years ago. He is also the living, ever-present, seeking, calling Holy Spirit, Whose purpose it is to keep us in His company: *in which Christian Church He daily forgives abundantly all my sins, and the sins of all believers.*"

And so, after a prayer of thanksgiving, the boys were soon safely in bed and asleep.

Suggestions to the leader

The purpose of the article with its three stories is to present the *reasonableness* and *naturalness* of the three basic themes of the Apostles' Creed: Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification.

The stories strive to create the mood of acceptance of what God has done and does, by relating His journey to understandable human experience.

Quickly enough each of us comes to the place where his religious experience confronts him with facts and forces that are beyond reason, and yet are true. The "Leap of faith" is required to grasp them. It is in the hope that a beginning on a simple, understandable level will lay foundations for larger affirmations in due time that the article is written.

It is not the intention of the article to touch on or discuss all that the creed teaches. Even the most thorough books of theology cannot do that.

Leaders should do some "homework," some outside reading. Don't miss *The Faith of the Church*, by Dr. Charles M. Jacobs, The United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia, 1938.

For a point of view in understanding the Creed, and the limitations resting upon anyone who writes about or discusses the Creed and the things men know about God, note these words of Dr. Jacobs:

"Our all too frequent error is in saying that this is all there is to know. That is dogmatism

and presumption and is not far from blasphemy. Above and below the musical scale that our ears are attuned to, there may be a thousand tones that none of us can hear; within and beyond our spectrum there are uncounted shades of color to which our eyes are blind; and so it must be with our knowledge of God. Beyond the things we know of Him, there must be more and more, no matter how our knowledge may be perfect, it will never be complete. This much, however, we do know of Him: no matter how much more there is,—He is the perfect Father, shown to us in Jesus Christ His Son, and working now, as Holy Spirit upon the souls of men."¹

The Creed has three parts, but it should be studied and meditated on as a *unity*. Only in this way may we approach the glory of the whole truth about God, which is the *Trinity*. Dr. Jacobs' words again are helpful:

"The Creed, then, speaks of God under three names. We need all three, if we are to put in any adequate form of words the Christian way of thinking about the God in whom we put our trust. Each of them describes an aspect of the God whom we have learned to know in Jesus Christ. To leave out any one of them is to impoverish our thought of Him and make it less than Christian."²

In the leader's preparation time should be taken for a careful re-reading of the three articles of the Apostles' Creed, and of the explanations in Luther's Small Catechism.

As an aid in grasping the content of the explanations, divide each one under the following headings. Where do *you* think each heading should be placed?

1. Explanation of the first article:
 - a. What God has done.
 - b. What He does daily.
 - c. Why He has done it.
 - d. What I shall do.
2. Explanation of the second article:
 - a. Who Jesus is.
 - b. What He has done.
 - c. How He has done it.
 - d. Why He has done it.
3. Explanation of the third article:
 - a. What the Holy Spirit has done for me
 - b. What He does for the Church.
 - c. What He does daily for me in the Church.
 - d. What He will do.

¹ Page 86; ² Page 81.

Worship Suggestions

HYMNS:

- "Come Thou Almighty King" CYH 54
"My God, How Wonderful Thou Art" CYH 57
"Beautiful Saviour" CYH 52
"Come, Holy Ghost" CYH 63

Leaguers should note that the first hymn sings of the Trinity; the second sings of the first article, the third of the second article, and the fourth of the third article.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1; John 1:1-18; Acts 2:1-41

In the three scripture passages as in the hymns the three articles of the Creed are reflected. Instead of reading the three passages

in full, or instead of omitting one or two, divide the League into three groups, assign a passage to each group. Then ask each group to report briefly (a) the content of the passage, (b) which article of the creed it reflects.

THE PRAYER: Our Father, Who didst reveal and teach us the way of life in Thy Son Jesus, and through Thy Holy Spirit dost enlighten our hearts and nourish us in this truth: Receive, we humbly pray, our worship and thanksgiving for this Thy grace, and, enriched with the gifts of Thy Spirit, help us ever to adore and call upon Thee, the Father of mercy and love, as we have been taught by Thy Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.³

³ Collects and Prayers, Number 397.



SUNDAY

**Let it never
be like this**



You can improve it.



SCHOOL

Two topics to show you how

It Can Improve You

Some time ago a popular magazine in the field of religious education ran a series of questionnaires about young people's religious life. Maybe you would like to compare the results with your own feelings. Let's look at some of the questions which were asked.

In the matter of church attendance, for instance, their reports were as follows:

Attend regularly	36%
Attend, but not regularly	51%
Never attend	12%

It is also interesting to see the reasons given by this group of young people for not attending church regularly.

were:

1. Work inside or outside the home23%
2. Social interests on Saturday night and Sunday ...18%
3. Feel that attendance is not necessary to believe15%
4. Dissatisfied with the local congregation or the church 14%
5. Lack of parental interest ..11%
6. Change of residence 9%
7. Lack of Transportation ... 7%

The question of prayer was also put to the group of young people. Why do

they pray? Their answers were as follows:

1. To ask for something21%
2. To thank God18%
3. To talk to God15%
4. To ask guidance11%
5. To comply with habit10%
6. To seek comfort 8%
7. To ask help for others 5%
8. To ask for forgiveness 4%
9. Unclassified

Now, let us look at the other side of the picture. Let's ask ourselves the questions: What do young people expect from the church and the Sunday school? Why do they go to Sunday school and church? Why do they want to know more about the Bible and have a more intimate fellowship with Christ? Here are some excerpts on the positive side:

These young people stated that they wanted to pray, to learn more about God, to form a more intimate fellowship with Christ for the following reasons:

- a. Desire to be closer to God because my life purpose brings peace of mind.
- b. Affords inner satisfaction.
- c. Builds faith, hope, and courage.

d. Keeps my mind on security rather than worry.

e. Gives my life extreme satisfaction.

Look at that list again. You will notice that these are some of the goals toward which all men strive. Why not begin with our own Sunday school and see if there isn't some interesting and effective means whereby we can look at these very important questions and relate them to happier and more godly lives?

I've always thought Sunday school could be more interesting. Three things are very important:

1. That we have a good teacher.

2. That we stay on the subject of our lessons and get somewhere in our discussions.

3. That we do things a little bit differently every now and then, so that we can keep up keener interest on the part of the pupils.

Let us take these three suggestions one at a time.

First, we could encourage our teacher plenty, if we do something about more regular attendance and more active participation when we are in the class. I don't think I would like to teach a small group of sleepy, un-interested pupils Sunday after Sunday. If, as we have just seen, really important questions are discussed in the Sunday school, questions which actually affect our whole personality and determine the shape of our own lives, I think we would wise up rather quickly and begin doing something different about our Sunday school classes.

Nothing succeeds like success.

I have noticed that once a good class gets going and has warm discussions, it is much easier to get people to come. The opposite is true also. As soon as we start going down hill in our Sunday school classes nobody wants to come and the spirit is low. Why don't we make up our minds that we are going to come to Sunday school and come regularly and start asking some of these important questions that actually shape our lives.

The second important consideration is that we really have worthwhile discussions. Unless we talk about things worth-

while in Sunday school, I see no point in just sitting. Let's take singing for example. Just notice the difference between hymn 1 and hymn 2. (Note: Pianist plays "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" terribly slow and listlessly. Then, after a pause, the pianist plays the same hymn with spirit and enthusiasm. The Lutheran League hymn will be good for this demonstration also.)

You see what I mean. Worship can either be dead or pleasant. The same thing goes for our discussions. If we sit around uninterested in what we are discussing classes can become deadly. Let us take an example.

Note: Here is another demonstration of uninteresting and dull discussion. A speaker starts out with a very dull and monotonous tone, talking only about generalities. Then, the speaker changes tone completely, adds interest, uses various teaching methods, such as an object to encourage the interest of the group (Practice this carefully beforehand.)

One of the things we need most in Sunday school is a variety of interesting methods of teaching and worship, so that we add zest. For instance, let us try an example here in our own League meeting. I am going to pretend that this is a Sunday school class and that our lesson today is the story of one of the Old Testament prophets. We are going to use the word game of three clues and let the group determine the identity of the man.

Here's clue No. 1: He was born of wealthy parents many years before Christ. He loved a certain important city. (Pause to see if anyone knows the identity of the man.)

All right, here's clue No. 2: Not only did this man think a lot of a certain great city which incidentally was Jerusalem, but he actually prophesied the name of the town in which Christ would be born, the town of Bethlehem. (Second pause)

Just in case you aren't quite sure of the identity of this man, let me give you the final clue. If you will look in the Old Testament, you will find that his prophecy appears just before the book of Jeremiah.

(The man is Isaiah.)

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

I Timothy 4:11-16. Here is some good advice from Paul to his spiritual son, Timothy. Young people frequently set the pace of living in the home, school, and community. Every generation looks to youth for new enthusiasm and new leadership.

I Corinthians 12:1-12. If you placed all the important gifts you have ever received in front of you which would be cherished the most? Perhaps some of the most important gifts that you ever received wouldn't even be included in the gifts before you. Paul here tells the people of Corinth that there are some very important gifts and he would like the Corinthians to know about them. Look at the list in this 12th Chapter and notice some of the spiritual gifts which you have received.

Matthew 13:1-9. Mature people are individuals who have yielded to the seed which God plants in man's heart. Here is a picture of how God's Word can make our lives complete. It might be a good idea to discover the thorns and rocky places in our own thinking.

Romans 5:14. The greatest message that a person can hear is that he is justified by faith through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Peter 2:1-10. Some things have to be put away in order to achieve the happiness and peace which is characteristic of a Christian personality. Our hours spent in study in the church schools indicate how our lives should be patterned. Here are suggestions as to how we can put our spiritual house in good order.

Revelation 5:11-14. There is a great day coming for all Christians. Every true Christian looks eagerly to the day when deliverance shall come as he reaches eternity. In the symbolic Book of Revelation much of this life is described.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE LEADER

Look at that title again. Does it look very interesting? Just in case you have the feeling that I had as I approached the topic, let us get off to a good start by proving to ourselves first that this topic can be very interesting and profitable. Even though the thought of discussing an organization seems much less interesting



than discussing our personal interests and relationships, our topic can become most interesting because it discusses that intriguing side of our character and experience that is usually undeveloped—our spiritual growth.

The aims of the topic are: (1) To show how Sunday school can become more effective through the support of interested young people. (2) To suggest real helps whereby members of the League can improve their classes and schools.

It will be necessary to rehearse certain parts of the topic before the meeting. For instance, in an attempt to show the advantages of good hymn singing, you will want to show the contrast between slow, draggy interpretation of a hymn and spirit, enthusiastic singing.

The success of this, or any other topic, depends upon whether or not you get off to a good start. Why not use an interesting lead question, such as: "Let us try to discover the I.Q. of our Sunday school. This time we are not talking about intelligent quotient, we're talking about interest quotient. If you were to label our Sunday school with just one word or sentence what would it be?" Be prepared to get some answers which are not pleasing. But make the most of them, so as to get your discussion off to a good start. One caution: Try to avoid getting off to such a negative discussion that the whole topic becomes just a "gripe session" without any constructive suggestions being offered.

PROGRAM

Prelude

Hymn: "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast In Thy Word" (121 PSH; 156 CYH)

Opening Versicles of the Vesper Service
(without music)

Psalm 46 (Read responsively)

Gloria Patri

Scripture: I Timothy 2:15, 16; 23-26

Prayer: Assigned to one of the Leaguers

Announcements, Offering

Hymn: "Hail, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord" (110 PSH; 61 CYH)

There are some different ways in which young people can help the Sunday school. Check yourself.

1. Offer your services as teachers and assistant teachers.

2. Volunteer to help in worship and service and recreation activities.

3. Serve as ushers, acolytes, members of the choir, and worship leaders.

4. Help arrange special plays and pageants for the various sessions of the church year.

5. Help get Sunday school youth interested in the Luther League.

6. Care for children in the nurse's office during Sunday school and church.

7. Assist in the every member visitation.

8. Call on absentee members and people who are ill.

9. Contact students who are away from college and members who are in the armed services.

10. Have regular check ups to see that your Sunday school is actually ministering to the needs and interests of youth.

● Equip unthinking, unreflective, prejudiced men with highly developed skill and technique that our modern methods of teaching can give them, and you are putting dynamite in the hands of children. You are giving them wonderful ability to "put something over" but no sense of what should be put over.—Everett Dean Martin, *New Outlook*

● We can fly jet airplanes, broadcast color television, make atomic power, but we're not sure how to bring up children.—*Banking*



SUNDAY SCHOOLS

are the
backbone of
education

put
spine
in your
life

by Lawrence Reese

Have you ever heard of the "Ragged School"? Perhaps no modern organization has a more interesting beginning than this unusual school which was started in England almost 180 years ago. Robert Raikes was its founder. Gloucester was its home.

Perhaps it was that windows of Raikes' home were being broken constantly by stones from the hands of street urchins. Maybe he had toured some of the factories and sweat shops and seen mere children putting in sixty hours per week. It could be that he passed by filthy, street corner gangs everywhere he traveled. Whatever the immediate reasons, Robert Raikes decided to do something about the ignorance, cruelty, and hopelessness that surrounded every lad and lass in his community.

Raikes invited a group of children to his home on Sundays. Instead of browbeating them he showed them kindness.

He taught them and cared for them. What's more, he gave them hope and broader vision.

A judge became interested. He helped. Formerly one out of every four of these waifs would wind up in the hangman's noose. Now things were changing. Young people and adults joined Raikes in a venture of kindness and love. Sunday discussion groups were held regularly. Candy, Bible stories, the character of Raikes—all these attracted children in increasing numbers. Sessions began at 10 in the morning and lasted until noon. After lunch the children returned and stayed four more hours.

The character of the Ragged School changed. Hands and faces were washed. Hair was combed. Boys and girls, young men and women, learned to read and write. There was always something interesting at the Ragged School.

But the school had its difficulties. People were suspicious. Parents were not cooperative. Even the clergy looked askance at this new venture. Despite these difficulties, however, the school prospered.

WHY SUNDAY SCHOOL?

Many young people today ask: "Why Sunday school, what's the good of it?" It might be a good idea to mention some of the reasons why Sunday school is very helpful for everyone:

1. It's the church at school. In Sunday school we learn about the Bible, church history, hymns, liturgy, doctrine, and the like.

2. We find God's purpose for our lives. We study about the things which belong to God and the things which belong to men and we find our place in the world according to God's will.

3. We meet great personalities. Men and women of the past are an inspiration as we plan our own lives. Think of all the help we can get from Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, Miriam, Mary, Dorcas, Paul, and Jesus.

4. We learn the most important thing that life shall offer: That the cross and the resurrection are ours by faith, given freely to those who believe. This may sound like a miracle and that's just what

it is! It's the miracle of God's love. The more we study and worship in the Sunday school the more we understand the greatest miracle of life. If the Sunday school did nothing more than help us learn the one great truth, it would still be life's most important learning experience.

5. We have fellowship with God. Lives are made happy and satisfactory because of people. In the Sunday school we have an opportunity to meet the finest personalities. We meet God and have fellowship with him regularly. Then we meet his people, people whose lives are fashioned after the pattern of Jesus.

YOU AND THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

If we are not too active in the Sunday school and its work maybe we should ask ourselves: "Are we not missing something worthwhile?" Here's a little test. If we can answer all these questions with a definite yes, we may not need Sunday school. If we can't maybe we had better rework our Sunday morning schedule and go to the one place that can answer these questions:

1. Are you able to trace the story of how God has been revealing himself to men from the time he appeared to Adam, Abraham, Moses, and the prophets until the time he actually became the God-Man in Jesus? Then can you find your own life included in this great unfolding plan of God?

2. Are you aware of the fact that, from the very beginning, God has had a definite plan for you, a way in which you should invest your life? Have you been able to find that plan so that your ideas are in harmony with your Creator who originally planned your life?

3. Do you know what happened at Sinai, the mount of the sermon, the upper room, Calvary, the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, and how important these things are in your life?

4. Are your life's greatest decisions thus far completely satisfying because you feel that God would have them that way? Will you or have you considered God's plan for you as you choose a life work, a life partner, and a philosophy of life?

5. Do you know what happens

ternity? Have you thoughtfully considered your greater life, the one which is to come? Have you contemplated the great moment when you shall join the great company of people who have been taken into God's presence eternally?

6. Are you happy? You ought to be! God intended that we should have many happy and satisfactory experiences. The Christian's life should contain serenity and peace—a peace which passes all understanding.

You ought to say "yes" to at least five out of the above six. If you rate lower than four something's the matter. No matter how good (or bad) your score is—let's learn more. Let's go to Sunday school!

• SUGGESTIONS TO LEADER

Any program with a theme like this can be deadly because it's about an organization. You see, it's always more interesting to think about and talk about people. But you can make this topic interesting and extremely helpful.

Be sure, first of all, to see the importance of a discussion on Sunday schools. Remember that 75% of our church members are won through the Sunday school. Note, too, that today there is a greater interest in the Bible and Christian truth than there has been for years. Look at your list of best sellers and see the many religious books among them.

If your congregation is an average one, there are many young people in your age group who are not active in Sunday school. Maybe it's *passé* for them, they've outgrown Sunday school. Or have they?

More happy, secure marriages are made in church and Sunday school acquaintances than anywhere else. Young people also find themselves in a life work that is more satisfying after they find the difference between just "getting a job" and aligning their lives with the religious philosophy of "this is what God asks me to do with my life." These and many other ideas and ideals grow out of Sunday school experiences.

• PROGRAM

Prelude

Hymn: "Day Is Dying In The West" (348 PSH; 125 CYH)

Leader: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Amen.

Psalm 122 (Read responsively)

Scripture: Psalm 78:1-7

Prayer: Assigned to a member of the League
Special Vocal or Instrumental Music

Discussion

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

• TOPIC

Leader: How well is your Sunday school caring for the needs and interests of your young people? Tonight we have discussed some of the weak and the strong points of our school. This is a good time to mention some very different avenues of improvement. After all, the goal of our Sunday school is to learn more about God and the Christian way of life. As I see it, there are four activities which go to make up a successful Sunday school program. Let's look at these four activities which go to make up a successful Sunday school program and see how well our congregation is doing.

WORSHIP. Is our worship really interesting and inspiring? Do we look forward to worship because it's our opportunity to get closer to God? Does it actually make us feel that we have been helped and strengthened after we had spent some time in our Sunday school in worship by song and spoken word?

STUDY. Not everything about religion is a mystery. God is constantly revealing himself to his beloved children. But how much do we know about God? If God has great plans for our lives, how much do we understand about those plans?

SERVICE. Can we think of at least 25 things that we are doing for our congregation and the church at large? Are there activities in the Sunday school which really interest us? The Gospel is a call to action. The result of our worship and study should be evident in the service activities which we accept as part of our lives.

RECREATION. Can we say that our Sunday school has good morale? Do we have enough informal gatherings in the home, church, and place of fellowship and recreation, so that we can honestly say that there is good fellowship at all times in our Sunday school?

Finally, we must say a word about organization. Let's ask ourselves how good is the youth division in our Sunday school? Is any one appointed to take care of the needs and interests of youth. Some time ago I saw a chart published by the Parish and Church School Board which picked an ideal setup for a youth division of the Sunday school. Maybe we ought to write for it and do a little comparing.

Sunday school can be fun! It can be one of the richest experiences of our lives. Don't let your school be a "ragged" school! Dress it up with a real mission and a vital message for your youth.

A story of

MISSION

WORK

IN

MALAYA



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FEAR**

FREE

and in quantity)

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